

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 14, 2004

Julie Louis Gerberding, MD, MPH  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Rd  
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Gerberding:

As chairpersons of the Congressional COPD Caucus, we strongly urge the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to expand its data collection efforts on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). As you know, COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States and the only one of the top ten causes of death that is on the increase.

In 2002 the CDC released a report on COPD in the U.S. that estimated 10 million Americans had physician diagnosed COPD. However, the report estimated that a total of 24 million Americans had evidence of impaired lung function or COPD. The CDC report clearly indicates that COPD is under diagnosed.

The 2002 CDC report provides valuable information about the size and scope of COPD disease in the U.S. However, this report represents only a snap shot in time of COPD. Continued monitoring of COPD is essential to capture disease trends, provide state-specific incidence and prevalence data and target COPD intervention and treatment programs.

We strongly urge the CDC to increase its data collection and tracking efforts on COPD, specifically to:

- Include questions on COPD in the National Health Interview Study (NHIS). The NHIS questions should refer to COPD by name (the current measure of "COPD," which includes chronic bronchitis in the previous year or emphysema, is inadequate);
- Include spirometry measurements for COPD in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (measurements were dropped after the 1994 survey);
- Add COPD related questions to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey that asks about COPD by name.

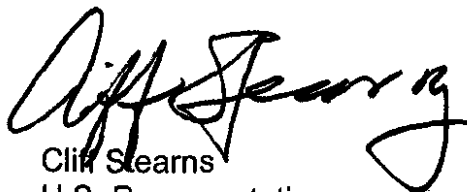
The addition of these COPD-related data entries to the CDC's surveillance tools will significantly enhance the efforts of the public health sector to target COPD prevention, education and treatment programs to communities in greatest need.

We want to thank you for your tireless leadership in improving the health of all Americans. We look forward to your response to our request for continued data collection on COPD.



Mike Crapo  
U.S. Senator

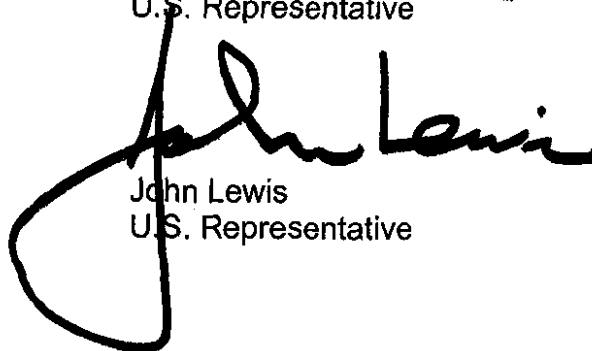
Sincerely,



Cliff Stearns  
U.S. Representative



Blanche Lincoln  
U.S. Senator



John Lewis  
U.S. Representative